The U.Va. Telecommunity
A Research Pilot

U.Va. CHARGE Tournament of Ideas Proposal
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What issues are modern dual-career couples facing?

“Career agency”
- Independence to pursue career based on own interests and talents
- May especially affect women
- At the same time, may be especially important to some women

Why is this a problem at U.Va. in particular?

“University hiring model”
- Ill-suited to facilitating career agency
- Cannot supply sufficient number of positions
- Does not fit reality of modern relationships
- Raises concerns about shoehorning people into positions
- Does not support individuals who are not interested in working in a university environment
Proposed Solution

The U.Va. Telecommunity

- **Pilot research program on telecommuting**
  - Existing U.Va. center or institute
  - Test group: current and future U.Va. dual-career couples
  - Identify barriers to telecommuting
  - Address barriers through cost-effective interventions

- **Address career agency problem** by empowering partners to pursue their own careers using their own talents, connections, and aspirations

What is it, and how would it help?

Why telecommuting?
Telecommuting is a growing phenomenon.

Telecommuters now make up 2.6% of the total workforce.

Telecommuting has risen by an estimated 79% from 2005 to 2012.

Data sources: Global Workplace Analytics; New York Times
What are the potential barriers to telecommuting?

- Lack of geographically extensive personal/professional networks
- Employee adjustment
- Productivity issues/employer hesitation

How will the U.Va Telecommunity address these barriers?

- Create networking opportunities
- Build relationships with other non-urban schools facing similar issues
- Establish a work center
- Provide career counseling
Why is the U.Va. Telecommunity the right choice? Why will it work?

- Allows for career agency
  - no longer is one spouse reliant on the other
  - spouses follow own career trajectory
- Cost-effective
  - draws on existing U.Va. resources
- Differentiates U.Va. from other spousal-support programs at peer schools
  - competitiveness
- Metrics will help gauge success
  - job placements and retention
  - richness of opportunities
  - satisfaction